



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

March 22, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

NAME	REPRESENTATION
Rebecca Brouwer (RB)	City
Sarah Elder (SE)	City
Matt Engwall (ME)	City
Katy Jones (KJ)	At-large
Chelsey Morrison (CM)	Orange County
Sylvia Sichi (SS)	City
Jason Smith (JS)	Alamance County ETJ
Cy Stober (CS)	Development Director
Aaron Davis (AD)	Recreation & Parks Director

Public Participation: James Allen joined the Zoom call.

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 22, 2021, MEETING SUMMARY

RB conducted a roll call vote to approve the February meeting summary.

A unanimous vote supported approval of the meeting summary.

COORDINATING WITH OTHER CITY COMMISSIONS

RB asked AD if the Recreation and Parks Advocacy Commission (RPAC) had convened yet.

AD replied the RPAC has met twice. He stated, per bylaws, the RPAC must meet every other month but has elected to meet monthly for now. The RPAC meets the Monday before the BPAC.

RB asked if the minutes are available on the City's website.

AD replied the first meeting's minutes are available and the RPAC needs to approve minutes from its March meeting.

RB asked CS if the Racial Equity Advisory Committee (REAC) and the Main Street Board had been constituted.

CS replied no. He commented applications are being accepted for the REAC positions and action has not yet been taken to seat the Main Street Board.

RB reviewed the primary goal of the agenda item is to consider the BPAC's role in relationship with other City commissions.



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CS commented the BPAC ordinance clearly establishes the BPAC's mission. He mentioned review of the BPAC and RPAC ordinances will help in understanding where the BPAC's advisory role ends and the RPAC's begins. CS highlighted the BPAC has a rather narrow mission of serving the City's bicycle and pedestrian needs. He remarked on the first duty of the BPAC to advise on bicycle and pedestrian *transportation* to specified areas, particularly recreation sites. CS asked the BPAC for comments or questions.

RB provided an example for clarification, stating if you are in a park recreating on your bike, that is the RPAC; but, if you are transporting yourself to the park via bike, that is the BPAC.

CS agreed.

CS returned to review of the BPAC and RPAC ordinances. He noted the RPAC's mission specifies guidance to the Mebane City Council regarding Recreation & Parks programs, facilities, policies, and long-range plans. In review of the RPAC's duties, CS remarked the duties specify use of recreational facilities and not how people access and get to the sites. CS asked AD if he had anything to add.

AD commented on the recent restructuring of the RPAC ordinance to highlight the need for champions and advocates for Mebane Recreation & Parks. He noted the BPAC is different in how it can make certain choices and recommendations. The RPAC is designed to advocate and champion what Recreation & Parks is doing.

ME asked if BPAC and RPAC money is allowed to co-mingle.

AD replied there are currently no funds dedicated to the RPAC that would go toward any facility upgrades, programs, etc. and emphasized the RPAC's design to advocate and champion Mebane Recreation & Parks.

CS added if the BPAC feels funding is best spent at a recreation or park site, that would be at the BPAC's discretion to make such a recommendation.

RB commented the distinction between the BPAC and RPAC is clear to her now, but she thinks future greenway infrastructure may blur it. A greenway serves as both transportation and recreation/linear park. She suggested some partnership may emerge, such as "Friends of the Greenway," and it is important to consider the BPAC/RPAC relationship.



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AD added the Recreation & Parks Department will program and maintain the greenway.

CS suggested the BPAC and RPAC could hold a joint meeting once or twice a year or appoint liaisons to report on the activities of the other committee.

RB asked AD if the RPAC has a Chair.

AD replied Sherri Seagroves is the RPAC Chair. He suggested the BPAC and RPAC consider sending members to one another's meeting, rotating who is representing the committees at each meeting.

RB expressed her support of the idea and suggested adding a standing agenda item to receive RPAC updates. She offered to contact the RPAC Chair to establish a connection and asked the BPAC how they would like to coordinate communication with the RPAC.

SE supported the idea of a joint meeting once or twice a year, noting this type of setting may allow for more to be accomplished with a specific agenda.

RB agreed with SE and asked AD if the RPAC would ever present to Council.

AD replied the RPAC offers more guidance to the Recreation & Parks Department but it is possible the RPAC will present to Council at some point.

CS discussed the role of Planning staff to comment on how bike/ped recommendations integrate and coordinate with the City's adopted plans and plans by other groups, such as the Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

CS commented on staff's opinion that the BPAC's mission is to make sure people traveling on bikes and by foot can get to recreational destinations safely. The RPAC would



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guide decisions about recreational activities at the facilities and would likely want to discuss with the BPAC about trail facilities inside parks.

AD added the BPAC needs to be involved in the location of new facilities to help people get there.

RB agreed, noting the BPAC must know a new basketball court is being planned to facilitate bike/ped transportation.

SS expressed her support of meeting with the RPAC and suggested the BPAC keep a list of items to discuss with the RPAC.

AD commented on his need to be more transparent with the BPAC about CIP projects for the Recreation & Parks Department to facilitate conversations about how people will travel to the destinations.

CS asked RB to consider setting aside an hour at a future meeting to discuss calendaring so the BPAC anticipates discussions with Council, RPAC, etc.

James Allen commented on the BPAC's role to act as a liaison to Council, NCDOT, and other groups to advocate for alternative means of transportation in and outside of the Mebane community.

RB expressed her agreement and referred to the previous comment by CS about coordinating with plans by other agencies, such as the Burlington-Graham MPO.

BPAC BUDGET PRESENTATION

CS reviewed the City's schedule for budget workshops. He remarked the Planning Department's capital requests reflect recommendations from the BPAC and its annual work plan. One project – the N First sidewalk – is not included because it is expected to be funded with alternative means and realized more quickly. An additional project is being recommended by staff to address a gap in sidewalk along S First that would connect to a future greenway trailhead. CS asked AD to update the BPAC on his capital project recommendation to realize bicycle and pedestrian connections to Lake Michael Park. CS noted 300 new homes are expected in the area and the final phase of townhomes at the Village at Lake Michael have been completed. He provided a brief review of multi-modal improvements associated with the new subdivisions.



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AD commented the goal of the capital project is to extend the pedestrian connection that ends at the edge of Lake Michael Park and a new subdivision called Retreat at Lake Michael to the connection at the park's entrance that is being realized due to a new subdivision called Tupelo Junction. He mentioned the project could expand in the future to increase access elsewhere. The current priority is to achieve initial access to the entrance to Lake Michael Park.

RB asked when the paths to be provided by the new subdivisions will be completed.

CS displayed the map and described the timing of the improvements.

- The shared-use path associated with the Havenstone development has been completed up to the first entrance of the latest path. The remainder will be constructed with later phases.
- The path running through the Retreat at Lake Michael is expected to be finished this year, possibly by the end of the summer.
- The crossing and access to the park associated with Tupelo Junction will be completed this year, while the remaining portions of the shared-use path will be constructed in phases.
- The Stagecoach Corner subdivision has not yet begun construction.

AD referenced the map and further explained the connection to be proposed as a capital project. He added the connection could be realized through sidewalk, nature trails, grit trails, or a combination.

RB asked if the request is for construction or design.

AD replied both – design and construction. He added the project request also includes a small amount of sidewalk along the entrance to Lake Michael and a crosswalk.

JS asked for more detail about the CIP process.

AD replied the request would be for sidewalk along Lebanon Road, which staff believes can be completed safely. An alternative option exists that includes a land bridge in the floodplain and then use Chapel Hill grit to construct a six- to eight-foot-wide trail.

JS asked about bicycles on sidewalks, recognizing the rules recently changed.



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AD and CS confirmed bicycles would be allowed on the proposed sidewalks. The policy allows for bikes on all sidewalks except in Downtown Mebane.

CS clarified the shared-use paths associated with the Havenstone and Retreat at Lake Michael subdivisions are 8-foot-wide paths, which is not the NCDOT standard of 10'. He remarked most engineers consider 8' sufficient, allowing for 4' travel lanes.

JS commented his main point is to include bike access with the improvements.

AD replied the proposed sidewalk or grit trail would allow for bicycles. He asked if the Tupelo Junction path is 8'.

CS responded it is 10' and noted the Bike/Ped Plan calls for the greenway to extend north through Mill Creek and access Cates Farm Park, eventually.

James Allen commented on Lebanon Road's popularity as a bicycle route and the safety concerns for cyclists traveling towards the Stagecoach intersection. He noted the subdivision developments and connections between them will help him as a cyclist get off Lebanon Road and use safer streets to travel to Mebane. He added grit trails would not be used by cyclists traveling in groups down Lebanon but would be beneficial for residents of the new homes.

RB agreed with Mr. Allen's points regarding cyclist safety and the more likely use of grit trails by neighbors.

ME agreed grit trails would be used by recreationalists and are more appealing than concrete sidewalk.

JS asked about the crossing of Lebanon Road at the entrance to the Tupelo Junction subdivision.

CS replied it is a high-visibility crossing without any flashing signals.

JS expressed safety concerns.

CS responded the crossing was considered with the traffic study for the subdivision. A flashing signal was not warranted by NCDOT. He



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suggested a signal could be a request of Council, but the City would be responsible for funding the improvement.

RB asked about intermediary measures, such as signage alerting drivers a crossing is ahead. She emphasized the amount of new traffic generated from the subdivisions.

CS replied signage is required by the developers and the City has been discussing the topic of safety signage with the NCDOT.

RB asked what is needed from the BPAC for staff budget presentations.

CS commented the Lake Michael project and the previously discussed S First sidewalk project are not included in the BPAC's 2021 Work Plan. He added the Work Plan does not need to be amended and staff advises the BPAC to take action if it wishes to include the two projects in its presentation to City Council.

RB commented on a recent conversation with the Mebane City Manager that caused her to want to endorse these projects for funding. She added the recommendation would be for the project to be included in the CIP for Recreation & Parks.

AD responded with his appreciation of the BPAC's support. He commented on the increased use of Lake Michael Park with the residential growth in the area.

CM asked about Lake Michael access from Ashbury. A trail exists that connects from Mourning Dove Ct. She asked who maintains the trail once you leave the Ashbury neighborhood.

AD replied with his belief it is likely a rogue trail access.

CM asked if improvement of the Ashbury access point could be considered.

AD responded this item should be discussed further with another CIP project, which is not being recommended this year. That project is to have trails going all around the lake.

RB replied this is a good project to keep on the BPAC's radar because it would be transportation from Ashbury to a park. She asked about who owned the section.



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SE responded the trail is well-established and she has been on it before.

KJ commented she was one of the first homeowners in Ashbury and the connection was marketed as a feature of the neighborhood.

The BPAC reviewed Google Imagery to consider the location of the trail.

CM, CS, and AD all agreed to review and report back.

CS added AD is requesting funding for a new Recreation & Parks Master Plan and access to destinations will be included.

RB made a motion for the BPAC to support the design and construction of the connections to Lake Michael Park as recommended by the Recreation & Parks Department.

A roll call vote was conducted. The motion passed with unanimous support.

RB remarked she would be working on the budget presentation at the end of the week with help from CS and AD.

BETTER BLOCK TRAILER – CONTINUED DISCUSSION

RB expressed her support of the revised Better Block video. She mentioned the video no longer has a call to action but a “stay tuned.”

The BPAC watched the new video.

AD asked CS who should share the video first on social media – the City or Recreation & Parks.

CS commented his understanding is the City Manager has given discretion to the BPAC on distributing the video. He suggested the video should come from the City first, then shared by Recreation & Parks and BPAC members.

RB agreed. She suggested the video be shared again closer to when the Better Block events will occur.



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KJ emphasized the importance of timing the release of the video, noting the message could be wasted if three months pass before the trailer is used.

AD requested a timeline from the BPAC to be considered by the City staff during weekly social media meetings.

SE asked if text would accompany the video to ask individuals to comment with ideas.

AD offered two ideas: 1) posting a link to the YouTube page and requesting comments there 2) posting a shorter version of the video to social media and allowing comments. He remarked on the need to have someone designated to monitor and respond to comments.

SE commented on the need to provide individuals with enough information to get involved and contribute.

RB suggested releasing the video two weeks prior to an event, highlighting where the trailer will be, and following up with a video or images of the event. She added the call to action for community members would be to provide feedback and evaluate the demonstration project.

SE responded that information might be included in the post. She commented the video by itself does not communicate a takeaway.

AD agreed text/explanation should accompany the video.

RB replied text in the video could also be edited to indicate what area of the City to check out. She added the BPAC is 98% there and still needs to decide on projects and the timing of the trailer.

CS added the trailer reservation is an ongoing discussion with Graham.

AD commented edits to the video will not take long. He mentioned the video's size, storage capacity, and getting it online as potential issues.

CS commented on the City's investment in GIS resources, noting a new GIS app as a potential platform for receiving bike/ped feedback. He added the video could be used by staff during public engagement for future planning efforts.



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SS asked if text in the video asking for ideas should be edited.

RB, SE, and KJ agreed the text causes confusion.

RB asked AD to forward the video link to her and/or the BPAC.

AD replied he would share with RB and she should be able to share with others.

RB summarized the BPAC will review the video again and work on establishing a timeline for the video's release. She moved the Better Block discussion to project selection. RB asked CS if the projects would move forward as follows: the BPAC makes a recommendation, which is discussed with the City Manager and then brought before City Council for approval.

CS confirmed.

RB noted that would have June as the earliest date for realizing a Better Block project.

CS reminded the BPAC the City Manager would need to coordinate with other departments – Police, Public Works, Fire. Additionally, coordination would be needed with adjoining property owners and the Downtown community, all of whom would need to be notified.

RB reviewed the level of coordination likely required for the previously suggested projects.

CS commented one of the listed crosswalks is now a funded project and will be realized this year.

ME commented the BPAC should do something not too cumbersome, but still with impact. He remarked doing something noteworthy will get people excited and expressed a desire to do more than crosswalks.

KJ agreed. She remarked on the need to do something on the bike side to balance previous recommendations more related to pedestrians. She commented the bike lane might create more dialogue.

CM expressed support for outdoor dining, commenting on the current context and the likelihood to generate business buy-in. She mentioned use of on-street parking by



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restaurants in Downtown Durham and remarked on the uncertainty of realizing outdoor dining on a permanent basis. CM added she thinks it will be easy to get buy-in from the Ashbury HOA for the Blue Lake Drive project. She suggested the BPAC pursue a variety of projects to show the many ways the Better Block Trailer can be used.

RB agreed, noting the bike lane, crosswalks, and traffic calming could all occur concurrently since different Better Block materials would be used. She mentioned the crosswalks would not get a big “wow” but would get people thinking. RB commented doing the outdoor dining alone, without other improvements, might be tricky.

ME commented on the tables and chairs in the Better Block Trailer, remarking their functionality is lacking.

RB added the BPAC has \$500 to spend in consumables, though she was not sure that could fund tables and chairs.

CS replied discretionary funding from Planning and Recreation & Parks could be used. He remarked the City already has chairs.

ME asked if a table or bench from a City park could be temporarily relocated.

AD expressed his support and thought two park benches might be available.

RB asked the BPAC for thoughts on seeking approval to engage multiple Better Block projects concurrently.

ME suggested pursuing two projects to ensure the BPAC is successful and expressed support for a bike project and the outdoor dining.

SS asked if anyone had contacted Downtown restaurants to gauge interest.

ME mentioned the owner of Trackside is interested in outdoor seating.

JS added pursuing outdoor dining first might help generate buy-in for future Clay Street projects. He asked about City resources to support the projects.

CS replied cones are available. He mentioned rubber stoppers, such as those used for temporary parking, may be in short supply.



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AD added the City has plenty of the larger barricades but might not have many of the sawhorse barricades.

SS asked about rules pertaining to alcohol consumption in public streets.

CS replied a permit from the ABC Board would be needed and the City could help facilitate.

RB asked if the Health Department would inspect outdoor dining.

CS responded the City currently has a \$0 permit to respond to the need for outdoor dining during COVID. The City would require enough information to ensure Fire safety and ADA accessibility.

ME asked about the logistics of pursuing outdoor dining as a project with permission of the ABC Board and without showing preferential treatment of certain businesses.

CS replied staff would likely be directed to coordinate with the ABC Board to sanction the activity. He remarked an enclosed space should make it okay. CS commented Downtown partners may be able to assist as a beer garden has been established by Destination Downtown for past festivals. He suggested finding a neutral location to benefit multiple Downtown businesses, noting the City does own property.

RB reviewed the proposed ideas for Clay Street, noting the BPAC is only wanting to pursue outdoor dining for now.

JS asked to add bike parking to the outdoor dining project, suggesting a bike rack could be moved from another location to Downtown.

RB asked about the BPAC's enthusiasm to pursue the Ruffin bike lane.

ME commented on the connection to the Community Park.

Not hearing much from the BPAC, RB suggested the Ruffin bike lane as a project.

KJ commented on creating an event associated with the projects to support biking, walking, and Downtown businesses. She noted timing is key, given COVID.



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CS commented the first few months of the process will be focused on gathering approvals.

RB added the BPAC could announce the Ruffin and Clay projects together and provide a suggested itinerary. She asked if the BPAC was comfortable moving ahead with those two projects, indicating she would need to begin the process of coordinating with the City Manager.

SE expressed her support.

CM asked if traffic calming in Ashbury could be considered.

SS asked for more detail regarding the traffic calming.

CS referenced recent subdivisions considered by staff and Council which are providing curb bump-outs with mid-block crossings to slow traffic. He suggested something similar could be tested in Ashbury. He noted the City Engineer is not comfortable with tapering lanes and the Fire Department is not comfortable with speed bumps/tables.

CM expressed her openness to experimenting with different ideas. She mentioned the possibility of street crossings where mulched trails begin.

RB asked if the BPAC had to wait for the Better Block Trailer to test some of the ideas CS described.

CS responded the BPAC could make the recommendation independent of the trailer.

KJ confirmed all improvements using the Better Block Trailer are temporary. She mentioned it may be frustrating for Ashbury residents to have an improvement for a short time and then it be taken away.

CM responded this is her concern with outdoor dining. She asked if the experiment does work how



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will the City move forward with a permanent solution.

JS expressed a need to consider how success will be measured and baselines and objective standards established.

KJ added the Better Block Trailer will contribute to creating advocates beyond the BPAC for these kinds of improvements.

CS commented on the benefits of tactical urbanism to evaluate if a project will work in an area.

SS asked if newer neighborhoods are considering traffic calming to avoid these situations.

CS confirmed and mentioned the planted median associated with Mebane Towne Center.

RB asked the BPAC if she should discuss the following projects with the City Manager: Ruffin St bike lane; Clay St outdoor dining and bike racks; Blue Lake traffic calming.

The BPAC agreed.

ME asked if the bike lane on Ruffin could be accomplished with a two-way street, noting the difficulties associated with a one-way street. He suggested the Fourth St Bike Boulevard as a back-up.

CS asked if ME was referencing one-way travel for bikes or automobiles.

ME replied automobiles and asked if enough pavement width currently exists.

CS responded Ruffin will be a challenge, but part of the purpose of using the Better Block Trailer is to show challenges. He did not foresee the need to redirect traffic to one-way and suggested expressing those concerns with the request to the City Manager.

RB suggested ME join her on the call with the Manager.



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RB asked CS if the BPAC should make a request now to reserve the trailer or wait until after her meeting with the City Manager.

CS recommended waiting until after the conversation with the Manager. He reminded the BPAC the trailer is reserved for a three-month period and the temporary projects do not have to be completed at the same time. He mentioned the school schedule would need to be considered with the Ruffin project.

COMMUNITY INPUT & PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA

CS mentioned this item was previously discussed in the context of the Better Block video and the BPAC receiving recommendations from the public. Recognizing the time, CS advised discussing the item at the next meeting. He suggested the BPAC explore the provided links.

RB expressed her preference to push the item to the next meeting. She added that Corporal Ward with the Mebane PD should be invited to the April meeting.

The BPAC agreed to discuss the item at the April meeting.

NEW & ONGOING BUSINESS

Bike Helmet Initiative Update

RB reported the bike helmets were awarded. She mentioned an email from the NCDOT requesting the date of the bike rodeo. RB informed the BPAC the bike rodeo will be an item on the April agenda and Corporal Ward will join the discussion. The bike rodeo is the main distribution point for the helmets.

RB recognized JS had an item to discuss.

JS reported on a session he attended during the Piedmont Legacy Trails Virtual Summit. The session was about grant funding through the North Carolina Recreational Trails Program (RTP), which has open applications for funding to be awarded in December.

RB asked about the link to the funding opportunity.

JS replied he would share the link to the video.

CS shared his screen showing the webpage.



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ME responded he knows of trails in the area that have been funded with RTP grants.

RB asked if the City has ever received the funding.

CS commented he was not aware.

AD replied he reviewed the grant last year. He expressed interest in involving the RPAC with the opportunity.

RB and JS agreed.

AD mentioned he would bring up the opportunity at the next RPAC meeting.

ME commented the Triangle Land Conservancy often applies for the RTP funding and have used the grants to build trails. He suggested connecting AD with his contacts.

JS commented beyond funding the construction of trails, the program also offers funding to support safety and education. He mentioned the safety and education program was presented as underutilized.

RB expressed interest in pursuing a safety campaign once the greenway is constructed.

AD asked if education would include trail maintenance classes.

JS confirmed many groups use the funding for trail maintenance and design.

AD mentioned the first maintenance class at Cates Farm Park. He expressed interest in doing more classes as trails and greenways are established.

City Projects Updates

CS commented more information on forthcoming projects will be discussed during the budget workshops. He mentioned a new corridor plan has been adopted for the extension of Lowes Boulevard. The design includes a multi-use path on one side and a sidewalk on another. CS commented on the Buckhorn Area Plan, which was recently discussed in a joint meeting between Orange County and the City. He mentioned desire



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for trails along Seven Mile Creek and an emerging recreation area. The Buckhorn Area Plan was not adopted by the City Council and there has been no action since the joint meeting.

AD reported on the trails at Cates Farm Park. He mentioned that fill-in grit is expected to be purchased to address wash-out areas and that the City is considering grit for the area between the two wooded areas, which may require permission from Duke Energy. AD remarked on getting a trail counter at Cates Farm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Meeting summary by Ashley Ownbey, City of Mebane Planner